

What God Has Joined Together Let Not Man Separate

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[0:00] Lord Jesus, would you cause your word to dwell richly in the midst of us this morning? God, would you give us open hearts to receive what, Lord Jesus, you would speak to us through your word this morning?

God, would you comfort those needing comfort? Would you convict those who need conviction? Would you direct those who need direction? And God, would you pour out grace upon us all? Father, would you pour out your spirit now upon us, your people? God, form your mind in us for the glory of Christ, and it's in his name we pray. Amen.

Amen. You may be seated. Children, you may scoot to your Sunday school class. Before I forget, Billy and I, congratulations on Ezra.

Thank you. Would you pass on our love to your dear wife? All right. Would you open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 19, verses 1 through 12?

[1:08] We got quite a passage in front of us this morning. I'm reminded of the great blockbuster movie, The Princess Bride. Marriage.

Marriage. Marriage is what brings us together today. Love. Love. Love.

True. Love. Actually, what brings us together today is God's Word and our Lord Jesus Christ. And he's got something to say about marriage, divorce, remarriage, and if we can get to it, singleness. And so, would you open up your Bibles to Matthew 19? And let's look to God's Word. Let's hear the voice of our King.

Now, when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And large crowds followed him and he healed them there.

[2:10] And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?

Jesus answered, have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female? And said, therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?

So they're no longer two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together? Let not man separate.

And the Pharisees said to him, why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away? And Jesus said to them, because of your hardness of heart, Moses, allowed you to divorce your wives.

But from the beginning, it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife except for sexual immorality and marries another commits adultery.

[3:16] Then the disciples said to him, if such is the case of a man with his wife, it's better not to marry. But Jesus said to them, not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.

For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

Let the one who is able to receive this receive it. We live in a time and culture where there are a lot of questions and controversies surrounding what is marriage.

We're asking basic questions. What is marriage? That's the question being asked in our culture today. And furthermore, how about this question?

Are Christians allowed to divorce? And if Christians are allowed to divorce, under what circumstances? When can they divorce?

[4:22] And if a Christian is allowed to divorce, can they remarry? And what about singleness? Well, Jesus is going to tackle all this.

And so as his followers, we need to carefully listen to what Jesus has to say today. Because he's going to give us some very important information about the nature of marriage and about divorce. And he also addresses singleness. I know many people have come to this topic guarded. And they're guarded for a variety of reasons.

Maybe you've been divorced. Maybe you grew up in a home where there was divorce. Maybe just hearing the word divorce is really hard for you. Well, Jesus is going to speak about divorce not to hurt you, but to heal you.

He wants to help you. And he wants us to think right about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. And so this is a complex topic.

[5:39] It's highly charged. And so this morning, I'm not even going to pretend that I'm going to address everything connected to it. I can't talk about every situation and every possibility surrounding what matters about marriage and divorce and remarriage.

Let's let Jesus speak. And what we're going to hear him talk about and how he talks about, it's surprisingly comprehensive. So this morning, I want to walk through the passage.

Three moves to this morning's sermon. First move is this. We're going to walk through the passage, 19, 1 through 12. And what you're going to see is Jesus talks about marriage, and then he talks about divorce, and then he talks about singleness.

And after we walk through the passage, what I'm going to give you is a summary of Jesus' teaching on divorce, marriage, and remarriage.

And so I'm going to approach it bullet style. I'm going to pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, give you some realities of what Jesus taught us to summarize. And so you can have in one place what Jesus taught about marriage and divorce and remarriage.

[6:47] And then finally, I'd like to wrap up our time together by saying, so what does this mean for us? What does this mean for us moving forward as followers of Jesus?

How do we live in this culture that has a very different view on marriage and divorce than what Jesus is going to show us today? And how do we treat one another? What does this look like moving forward?

And so three moves. And the first move is to walk through this text. My desire this morning is for you to hear what Jesus has to say about marriage and divorce.

So that you see with your own eyes what Jesus says. And let that form God's mind in you. So let's get through this passage.

Let's walk through this text. When Jesus walks through this text, when we go through this, what we're going to see is Jesus is going to talk about marriage.

[7:50] And what we're going to see is there is a question posed to Jesus and then he responds to it. And then we move to divorce. There's a question posed to Jesus and then he responds to it.

And then if we can get to singleness this morning, which I don't think we're going to be able to get to, his disciples raise an issue about marriage and Jesus responds to it. And so there's a dialogue here in Matthew chapter 19, 3 through 12.

But Matthew 19, 1 and 2 sets the scene. So would you look at that with me? Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

And large crowds followed him and he healed them there. Remember that the gospel of Matthew is a story. And with a story, there is a storyline.

And with this gospel, there is growing tension and moving towards climax when Jesus dies and is raised from the dead. Do you know where that takes place?

[8:52] In Jerusalem. And so what we see happening here in Matthew 19, 1 and 2 is Matthew is moving us along the storyline of the gospel.

And we move from the northern region of Galilee where Jesus has been doing most of his ministry. And now we see Jesus coming into Judea, which is in southern Israel. And do you know what city lies in Judea? Jerusalem. And that's where Jesus is going to end up. And that's where the climax of the gospel of Matthew takes place. That's where Jesus is crucified and is raised from the dead. And so what we see happening here is we have this narrative in which Matthew is covering all sorts of ground. And then it moves into dialogue and slows down in verse 3. Would you look at now verse 3? And this issue of marriage is raised.

[9:52] And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause? And so in verses 3 through 6, Jesus and these Pharisees have a dialogue.

And these Pharisees tested him. So imagine Jesus is kind of rolling into Judea. And the Pharisees, they do not roll out a red carpet for Jesus. They greet him with testing. It's a contested rival. And so they greet him by asking a very interesting question. They say, Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause? Now, that may seem really odd to you. Jesus shows up in town. And the first question that these religious leaders ask him is, Well, can a man divorce a woman for any cause? Huh? Huh? Huh? There's something going on here that you need to know about. There is a long-standing debate that this question is drawing upon.

[11:01] And that debate revolves around two words in Deuteronomy 24.1. Would you flip back in your Bible to Deuteronomy 24, verse 1?

Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Bible. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. And so you get to Deuteronomy, get to chapter 24, and look at verse 1. And there is controversy and debate within Judaism at this time that Jesus is walking into Judea. There's debate over 24.1 in two words.

Let me point out the two words to you. 24.1 reads this. When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he's found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, dot, dot, dot, and this case law wraps up in verse 4.

But the controversy are over those two English words, some indecency. Now, back in this day, there are two camps.

[12:26] The debate had two camps. There is the narrow and strict camp, the school of Shammai, and they would interpret some indecency as some act of infidelity, unchastity.

So it was sexual unfaithfulness. And so they would say, oh, the some indecency, that's sexual infidelity, and therefore a divorce can be granted. The other camp is the school of Hillel.

And the school of Hillel was a kind of loose and broad interpretation of those two words, some indecency, which would include unchastity, but it would also include things like burning your roast. It would also include if your husband's eyes fell on some other woman more attractive than you. That would constitute some indecency, and he could hand you a certificate of divorce, send you on your way.

So when these Pharisees ask Jesus this question, we read in 19.3 of Matthew, they say, is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?

[13:37] Behind that is Deuteronomy 24.1, and they're asking him, what do you think about some indecency, Jesus? Furthermore, these Pharisees asking Jesus the question, they were of the school of Hillel.

So what they're thinking is, hey, we have any reason to get a divorce with our wives, let's see what Jesus thinks about it. Let's test him on it. So this is just not some small question.

Jesus is being drawn into a debate. And we even talked about the whole Herod and Herodias thing and John the Baptist dying for coming down on this issue. Is it biblical for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?

They're asking, are you with us or are you against us, Jesus? So what you're getting a sense of back in the day where Jesus was walking here, divorce was rampant and easy.

They didn't even have to hire attorneys. They didn't have to go to court. They could just hand a certificate of divorce if there was some, quote unquote, some indecency. Our day is very similar.

[14:57] Divorce is rampant in our culture. There's no fault. Divorce, we all know the statistics. 50% of divorces that start in marriages end in divorce.

That's outside of the church as well as inside of the church. So how Jesus answers this question, is it biblical for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?

That's poignant. That gets some traction for us today. All of us know someone who's been divorced or we ourselves have been divorced.

And so they ask Jesus this question. And in verses 4 through 6, Jesus answers and he puts on a clinic. Let's read what he has to say.

Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh?

[16:04] I just want you to see where he starts. You know what he's saying to the Pharisees? He's saying that you guys have got your finger in the wrong spot in the Pentateuch. You've got to move from book 5 to book 1.

That's where you need to go. You've started in the wrong spot to talk about divorce. There's a better place to start. Not in a case law that has to do with an exception of the norm.

Let's start with the norm. And where the norm of marriage is found is in Genesis chapter 1 and chapter 2. So the place where Jesus starts is very important.

He says, okay guys, turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 1 and 2. That's what he's saying. And then look how he makes his argument.

In 19.4, Jesus says, Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female? It's a reference to Genesis 1:27, where God created humans in his own image, and he created them male and female.

[17:14] And what Jesus is talking about here is that God purposely designed male, male, and female, female. He's talking about our distinct anatomical equipment that uniquely defines us as male or female.

This is part of his argument. Jesus is saying God purposefully designed two sexes, male and female, defined anatomically.

What Jesus is espousing here is pushing back against the current trend in our culture to redefine gender apart from anatomy.

Jesus is bringing us back to the beginning. He's saying this is where you start. This is what gives definition. And so Jesus starts his argument by starting in Genesis 1:27 and saying God purposely designed human beings male and female anatomically.

That's what he's saying. And then he moves his argument now to Genesis 2:24. And we see that in verse 5. He who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

[18:45] Jesus is saying this. God who created humans male and female purposefully, anatomically, He designed them that way for a purpose, to unite together in the one flesh union of marriage.

They're designed for it. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

There's a reason why God designed us this way. He designed us to unite in a one flesh union. And that is for as long as you both shall live.

Would you look back in verse 5? There's a very important word I want you to see. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife.

That hold fast. That word comes from a Hebrew word that means to stick together, to join together, to cleave together, to cement together.

[19:55] When I was growing up, there was this commercial for super glue. And there was this guy who had this red hard hat. And they put some super glue on the top of his hat. And then they attached the super glue on the hat to an I-beam.

And that I-beam, this crane came down and pulled up the I-beam. And the guy would hold on to his red hard hat. And he would be pulled up into the air because of that super glue bond that could

never be broken.

This hold fast bond of the one flesh union between one man and one woman is not designed to be broken.

That's Jesus' argument. We were designed, male and female, to unite in a hold fast bond. So let me give you a definition of marriage based upon what Jesus is teaching here.

Marriage, biblically speaking, is God joining one man and one woman together in a life-long one flesh union.

[21:15] That's what marriage is. Genesis 1 and 2 marriage. That's God's design. And so Jesus' argument in response to this question is, Hey, did you not read in Sunday school, Genesis 1 and 2, that God created male and female anatomically?

And he created them anatomically that way to unite together in a one flesh union that's not meant to be broken apart? You guys are in the wrong spot. You've got to start in Genesis 1 and 2.

And in verse 6, Jesus sums up his point in answering their test. So they are no longer two, but one flesh united together for life.

And so God has purposely designed one man, one woman to unite together in a one flesh bond not to be broken. And why it's in Genesis 1 and 2 is this.

It's to be normative pattern. The normative pattern for all people in all places for all times. It's a huge claim. It's by design.

[22:31] And then Jesus wraps it up with quite a countercultural claim. He says, Marriage is God joining together for life.

Marriage is God joining together. Divorce is man separating what God has joined. So Jesus is not just saying, No, a man cannot divorce his wife for any cause.

He's forbidding it. Let not man separate. It's a command. Don't do that. What God has joined.

Don't separate. Let me just clarify what Jesus is not saying in that command to not separate and what he is saying. Jesus is not saying that it's impossible for man to separate what God has joined. Quite the contrary. It is possible. And we're going to get to that in a little bit. What Jesus is saying is, Don't separate what God has joined.

[24:04] He's intended it for life. Jesus is making a strong case for marriage from Genesis 1 and 2.

And there's nowhere in there any mention of divorce. Jesus' point is that marriage was instituted by the design of God. And divorce is a result of what we'll see as sinful human hard-heartedness.

So four things I want you to notice real quick. Where Jesus starts, he starts in Genesis, not in Deuteronomy. He starts in the beginning. When God created Adam and Eve.

And then notice how Jesus makes the case. He builds his case on the anatomical design of men and women. They're designed to unite together in a one-flesh union.

And notice how he speaks about marriage. It is God joining a man and a woman. And notice how he speaks about divorce. It's man separating, man breaking what God has joined.

[25:14] So this first question, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause? Jesus answers on the basis of Genesis 1 and 2, no.

God never intended a man to divorce his wife for any cause. But to hold fast to his wife in a one-flesh union for as long as they both shall live. And then there's another question.

So Jesus has talked about laid the foundation for marriage. And now he's asked another question.

And that question we see in verse 7. The Pharisees said to him, Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?

And in verses 8 and 9, Jesus will respond to that. What the Pharisees have just heard Jesus say is this. No, divorce isn't part of God's design.

And so here's what's going on in their minds. Moses, who under the inspiration of God wrote Genesis 1 and 2, also wrote Deuteronomy 24.1.

[26:21] So how is it that the same guy, same God, who spoke Genesis 1 and 2, would also speak Deuteronomy 24.1?

How do you make sense of that? And what they seem to think is that this Deuteronomy 24.1 is a command.

Did you see that? Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of a divorce and to send her away? Speaking of Deuteronomy 24.1. So is Jesus in a pickle here?

What's he going to do? He's going to go, too tough for me, guys. I'm out of here. So sorry. They don't have him over a barrel. Look what he does.

You see, the Pharisees have misunderstood Deuteronomy 24.1, and as a result of misunderstanding it, they've misapplied it.

[27:22] And what Jesus is going to do in verses 19.8 is he's going to clarify their misunderstanding and say 24.1 is not a command.

It's a concession. And that helps us understand how these two relate. Notice where Jesus begins. They say, hey, did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away? Why? And he said to them, because of your hardness of heart.

In other words, this wasn't part of God's original design. Why? This divorce business is the result of human hardness of heart.

Now, when we read that little phrase, hardness of heart, in our Bibles, it's language describing the posture of a person's heart towards God.

[28:22] Do you remember Pharaoh and the plagues? Do you remember what would happen to Pharaoh's heart when Moses would come to him? He would resist him. He would harden his heart. It's a way of describing prideful resistance.

And so what Jesus is saying here in verse 8 is, because of your sinful pride, Moses allowed you to divorce your wives.

It's a concession, not a command. Do you notice the change of words? Look at chapter 9 or 19, verse 7.

Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce? And then Jesus corrects them. He says, because of your hardness of heart, Moses allowed you to divorce.

It's not a command. And there's a big difference between the two. God is regulating sinful behavior among his people. The Pharisees had made Deuteronomy 24.1 say something it wasn't saying.

[29:34] They were making it into a command. And what Jesus is saying, it's not commanded. Divorce is not commanded. It's permitted. Deuteronomy 24 is an example of what's called case law.

If this happens, then you've got to do this. And what God through Moses did in Deuteronomy 24 was to regulate destructive behaviors that were resulting from hardness of hearts.

And so what 24.1-4 is, is a concession to hard hearts seeking to take advantage of women. There's an expression out there that says, hard cases make for bad laws.

When you build laws on exceptions, it's not good for a society. And what the Pharisees had made a law out of is a concession that regulated sinful behavior because of hard hearts.

So they're using it to justify their desires. And what Jesus is saying is that it's, this Deuteronomy 24, it's not a command, it's a concession. The Pharisee had made it, made an exception the norm.

[30:49] And Jesus repudiates it. After Jesus points out that Deuteronomy 24.1 is a concession to regulate sinful behavior, he adds, but from the beginning it was not so.

This isn't God's design. This isn't God's command. This is a concession. And you're making a mistake of building law out of it. So what we see here is this.

Divorce, what Jesus defines as man separating what God has joined together, is not a result of God's good design and creation, but it's the result of man's hardened hearts.

Divorce, divorce, divorce, is always the result of sin. It's always the result of sin. In a couple who divorces, it might be 50-50, it might be 75-25, it might be 90-10, 95-5, but there's always sin involved.

It's not God's design. And then in 19.9, Jesus goes on to give the only grounds for which a Christian can divorce another Christian.

[32:03] It's known as the exception clause. Look at verse 9. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.

We need to really understand what this exception clause is. Except for sexual immorality.

Jesus has already taught on it in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5.32. He says, But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

So we need to be clear on what this sexual immorality is. Let me just remind you where Jesus has already been.

He's already laid the foundation that marriage is a sacred joining of one man and one woman in a one flesh union for life. That's the norm for all people in all places and all times.

[33:11] It's not to be separated. But now we're asking the question, Is there ever a time where people are allowed to break what God has joined together? And Jesus is saying, Yes, there is.

There's one exception. When there is sexual immorality. Sexual immorality, those two words in English, are translating a Greek word, porneia.

You might have heard that in pornography. And what porneia is, scholars have shown, is this umbrella term for a variety of illicit sexual behaviors, like adultery, like bestiality, like prostitution, like homosexuality.

Even I would throw in polygamy. So the question that we need to answer right now is this. Why would God allow illicit sex outside of marriage to be the only grounds for divorce?

And by the way, it's not a requirement to get a divorce. It's an allowance. He doesn't require this. He permits it.

[34:21] Well, the answer goes back to Genesis 1 and 2. It has to do with the one flesh union God designed from the very beginning.

Just as a husband and wife consummate the one flesh union of their marriage on their wedding night, sexual immorality ruptures the one flesh union by bringing in a third party.

And it ruptures it to such a degree that God who joined a husband and wife together allows them to divorce. So here's what this means.

Five minutes of sexual infidelity can break what God has joined together for a lifetime. It shows you the significance and importance of this one flesh union.

That one flesh union, this marriage, is God's holdfast bond between a man and his wife.

[35:22] When there is sexual infidelity, that holdfast bond of the one flesh union gets ruptured. So much so, permission is granted by God to legally dissolve that marriage.

marriage. Now you might be asking, I've got a set of questions now because you may have a ton of questions on your minds. You may, well, what constitutes sexual immorality?

Well, I've already named some things, but one of the questions I'm regularly asked is, is pornography sexual immorality and does that give grounds for a wife to divorce her husband?

That's a hard one. It's not an easy one. After many situations, after a lot of dialogue with a lot of godly people, the conclusion I've drawn is that it can become grounds when a third party ruptures the sexual union of one man and one woman.

I don't say that lightly, but I do say it as a warning. Here's another question.

[36:41] If a married couple divorces, but there's no sexual immorality, what does that mean? Here's what that means. Their divorce is disobedience to God.

God had not permitted them to get a divorce. And so the question is, what should they do? And what the Bible would say is, what God would say, remain as you are.

Remain single. And start praying and trusting and seeing if God would do a work in which He would change your heart and change your former spouse's heart so that He could bring a restoration to that marriage.

That's where I'm so grateful for the words Jesus will say later here. And when He talks about someone who makes themselves a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom, if you find yourself in that position, live out your singleness for the glory of God.

Wait on Him. But it kind of leads to another question, right? What if one or both people who have divorced, what happens if they remarry someone else after they've divorced without biblical grounds?

[37:58] What then? Remain as you are. It would be further damage if you get a divorce in that second marriage because God sees that second marriage as a real marriage.

We see that in 19.9. And marries another, commits adultery. It's a real marriage, but it starts in adultery. It doesn't stay in adulterous relationship.

It starts as an adulterous relationship. So what do you do if you find yourself in that situation? You divorce someone.

There wasn't biblical grounds. You got remarried. You're married to somebody else now. It started, according to Jesus, as adultery. What now? What do you do? You remain as you are.

You stay married to that person. You acknowledge your sin of divorcing without warrant. You acknowledge that the second marriage began as adultery. And you call on God to forgive you.

[39:08] You confess your sins. And you confess them to the one who's faithful and just to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Here's what you need to hear. Divorce is not the unforgivable sin.

God has grace for this. He has mercy for this. You ready for another question? What about abuse? What about a wife who's physically abused by a husband?

Another way to say it is this. Salvati, are you saying that one five-minute sexual fling with someone other than your spouse is legitimate grounds for divorce, but a woman suffering abuse from her husband for 15 years has no legitimate grounds for divorce?

Is that what you're saying? And all I would do is humbly point you to Jesus. What does Jesus say? And what Jesus is saying is the only grounds he gives for divorce between two Christians is sexual immorality.

532.99. In 1 Corinthians 7.15, the apostle Paul, speaking with the authority of an apostle, says the only other exception for divorce is when a non-Christian abandons a Christian spouse.

[40:30] The Christian who's been abandoned by an unbelieving spouse is then free to divorce and remarry in the Lord. Now, you might be saying, well, Salvati, we just started talking about an abused wife.

Neither of these seems to apply to an abused woman. Is there any kind of resource, recourse in the church for a woman, a sister in Christ who's getting beat by her husband?

There is. But it's not in Matthew 19. It's in Matthew 18. And what we see in Matthew 18 is a process that Jesus lays out when one Christian is sinned against by another.

And what that Christian who's been sinned against does is she, or he goes to the one who's sinned against them and points out their fault. And if that person doesn't listen, they bring somebody else in.

And if that person doesn't listen to that, they bring the church in. And when the church goes to that person and they still don't listen, that church exercises discipline, removes them from her membership, and considers them an unbeliever.

[41:38] And if this is the case with a wife who's being beaten by a husband and this wife goes to that husband and she brings somebody else to that husband, which requires a tremendous amount of courage, and then brings in her church to this situation, and the husband still is resistant, he does not want to confess or admit his wrong, that church now has the liberty to put him out.

And all of a sudden, we find ourselves in a new situation. Because according to the church, that man is considered as an outsider, as an unbeliever. And now we're looking at 1 Corinthians 7.15 as a real possibility if he leaves his wife.

So Matthew 19 doesn't provide the answer for a woman who's beaten by her husband. It's wrong. Matthew 18 does. Here's what would happen in our church if a sister came up to one of the elders and says, hey, my husband has not been listening to me and he's physically hurting me.

Do you know what we would do? We would immediately take action. We would relocate that woman into a safe place with her children and we would confront the man. And we would go to him and we would say, you're breaking your vows, brother.

What are you doing? We'd gather information and then we'd call him to repent. That's what we would do. But the desire is to bring about repentance and restoration.

[43:09] man, this opens up a whole lot of things, doesn't it? In 1907, the Pharisees asked Jesus, why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and send her away?

And Jesus' response in 18 and 9, 19, 8 and 9 is, Deuteronomy 24, 1 through 4 is not a command of God, it's but a concession of God. The only grounds for divorce is sexual immorality and the only

other exception is when a Christian spouse is abandoned by an unbelieving spouse. And might I add this, when Jesus gives permission for one spouse to divorce another, he's giving permission to that spouse to remarry. And here's how I ground that. If you look at verse 19, chapter 19, verse 9, and I say to you, whoever divorces his wife except for sexual immorality and marries another commits adultery. That exception clause not only applies to divorce, it also applies to marrying another. It addresses both.

[44:34] If there's freedom to divorce, there's freedom to remarry. We've looked at what Jesus says about marriage.

We've looked at what Jesus says about divorce and the exception for divorce. In verses 10, through 12, Jesus addresses the issue of singleness.

I don't have time to go there. But let me just close by giving you a summary of Jesus' teaching and we'll close on that this morning. Here are seven points that summarize Jesus' teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

And I'm just gonna just rat-a-tat-tat right on through. Jesus raises the standard of marriage. He reminds us of the true nature of marriage.

It's God joining one man and one woman in a lifelong one-flesh union. He reminds us that marriage is sacred. God joining one man and one woman.

[45:43] That's the first point of summary. Second is this. Jesus clearly states that divorce is always the result of sin. It's the product of the hardness of a human heart.

It's a concession, not a command. Divorce is always the result of sin. That's the second summary. The third summary is this.

Though divorce is always the result of sin, not all divorce proceedings are sinful. The Bible permits divorce when there's been sexual immorality or when a Christian spouse is abandoned by an unbeliever.

In that case, though there's sin causing the divorce, the divorce itself is permitted by God. Four, when divorce has not been permitted because there are no biblical grounds, a subsequent marriage to someone other than the original spouse results in adultery.

532, 99, Mark 10. Five, when divorce is permitted because it has biblical grounds, remarriage is also permitted.

[47:03] The exception clause that applies to divorce applies to remarriage. Six, improperly divorced and remarried Christians should stay as they are but repent and seek forgiveness making peace as God allows and use their singleness for the sake of the kingdom to bring glory to God.

Jesus says that's legit which brings me to point seven. Singleness is a legitimate God-pleasing way forward. If you find yourself single, Jesus says you're in good company because he himself was single for the sake of the kingdom and to forego a one-flesh union for the sake of the kingdom according to Jesus that's legit.

There is one point of application I would just like to say for all of us. make that too. In light of everything that Jesus said here and he has said a lot and I haven't covered all of it we extend grace.

We extend grace to one another. We're slow to judge quick to listen. We graciously meet people where they are. We graciously disagree with people who have a different point of view than us. we graciously wade into difficult situation when God saves someone in the middle of a hard marriage situation. We graciously meet them there and walk with them and we extend grace to one another because hey we all make mistakes don't we?

[48:53] we all make mistakes. There are those of us in this room who look back on our lives and look at past divorces and remarriages and it is heavy hearted stuff.

We love you. We're glad you're here. We're glad that we get to follow Jesus together as you are together now. We extend grace to each other.

Ultimately it's about Jesus. We're not looking to win people to our position on marriage. Our greatest desire is for people to become followers of Jesus and experience the transforming power

of his grace, forgiveness, restoration, hope.

it's ultimately about Jesus. At the end of Matthew Jesus says go make disciples of the nations teaching them to observe all that I've commanded and that includes what he commands in Matthew 19 1 through 12.

Let me leave you with this. If you're going to remember one thing from this sermon I want it to be something Jesus himself has said and it's this.

[50:24] What God has joined together let not man separate. Let's pray together. Oh God in heaven I just feel the scale of this but I am so grateful for your word and God I do pray that you would help us your people live in light of your word and be courageous and standing on your word and that we would allow your word to direct our lives.

God I pray for those in the room who may be experiencing condemnation for past mistakes and sins. God would you remind them that in Christ they are forgiven.

that this is done paid for on the cross and that now you call them to follow you. God I do pray that you would save people from this city who are in messy marriages and that you would bring them along.

Help them to trust you and to obey you Lord Jesus. And I pray God that we would be a people that would be quick to show grace to each other. Understanding each other.

Long suffering with one another. Bearing with one another. God thank you for your grace. Thank you for your forgiveness. In Jesus name.

[51:57] Amen. to heaven.

Thank you.